

Appl. No. 09/998,050

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-8 (Canceled)

9. (Presently Amended) A method for generating a random number, comprising the steps of:

operating a plurality of flip-flops in a meta-stable state, each of the plurality of flip-flops being connected to delay circuitry operable to violate set-up and/or hold times of the flip-flop so as to put the flip-flop in a meta-stable state;

generating a random bit if one of said flip-flops enter said meta-stable state;

preventing the generation of a random bit if more than one of said plurality of flip-flops enter a meta-stable state within a predefined time interval;

providing an input signal for a first of said flip-flops; and

~~The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of inverting on-the input signal for a second of said flip-flops to ensure that said second flip-flop does not have the same input signal as a first flip-flop.~~

Claims 9-21 (Canceled)